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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Bureau of Agricultural Economics

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Numbers, Distribution, Composition, and  
Employment Status of the Farm Labor Group  
in the United States

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Tables and charts presented at the hearings  
before the Subcommittee on Senate Resolution 266 (74th Congress),  
of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, May 8, 1940,  
by William T. Ham, in charge of Labor and Tenancy Studies,  
and Josiah C. Folsom, Associate Agricultural Economist,  
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From this chart three things are apparent: (1) A decrease in the proportion of owners and an increase in the proportion of tenants; (2) An increase from 1920 to 1930 in the proportion of sharecroppers and a decrease in this proportion from 1930 to 1935; (3) A slight upward trend from 1910 to 1930 in the proportion of hired workers and a similarly gradual downward trend in the proportion of unpaid family workers. After 1930 there is a decided drop in the proportion of hired workers. The figures on which this chart is based are as follows:

Table 1.- Number and percentage in each tenure class gainfully employed in agriculture, United States, 1830 to 1935

United States, 1900 to 1935

| Year               | Total<br>(U.P.A.) | Owners and<br>managers<br>(Census) | Tenants<br>(Census) | Croppers<br>(Census) | Hired<br>(W.P.A.) | Family<br>(W.P.A.) |         |     |           |      |         |      |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------|-----|-----------|------|---------|------|
| : Thous-<br>: ands | : Pct. : ands     | : Thous-<br>: ands                 | : Pct. : ands       | : Thous-<br>: ands   | : Pct. : ands     | : Thous-<br>: ands |         |     |           |      |         |      |
| 1935               | 11,172            | 100.0                              | 3,947               | 35.0                 | 2,149             | 19.0               | 716     | 6.0 | 2,468     | 22.0 | 1,892   | 18.0 |
| 1930               | 11,173            | 100.0                              | 3,624               | 32.0                 | 1,838             | 17.0               | 776     | 7.0 | 2,850     | 26.0 | 2,035   | 18.0 |
| 1920               | 11,362            | 100.0                              | 3,994               | 35.0                 | 1,993             | 17.0               | 561     | 5.0 | 2,883     | 25.0 | 2,031   | 18.0 |
| 1910               | 12,146            | 100.0                              | 4,007               | 33.0                 | Thousands         |                    | Percent |     | Thousands |      | Percent |      |
|                    |                   |                                    |                     |                      | 2,355             |                    | 19.0    |     | 2,877     | 24.0 | 2,907   | 24.0 |
| 1900               | 9,490             | 100.0                              | 3,712               | 39.1                 | 2,025             |                    | 21.3    |     | 3,753     |      | 39.6    |      |
| 1890               | 7,861             | 100.0                              | 3,269               | 41.6                 | 1,295             |                    | 16.5    |     | 3,297     |      | 41.9    |      |
| 1880               | 7,113             | 100.0                              | 2,934               | 41.9                 | 1,025             |                    | 14.4    |     | 3,109     |      | 43.7    |      |

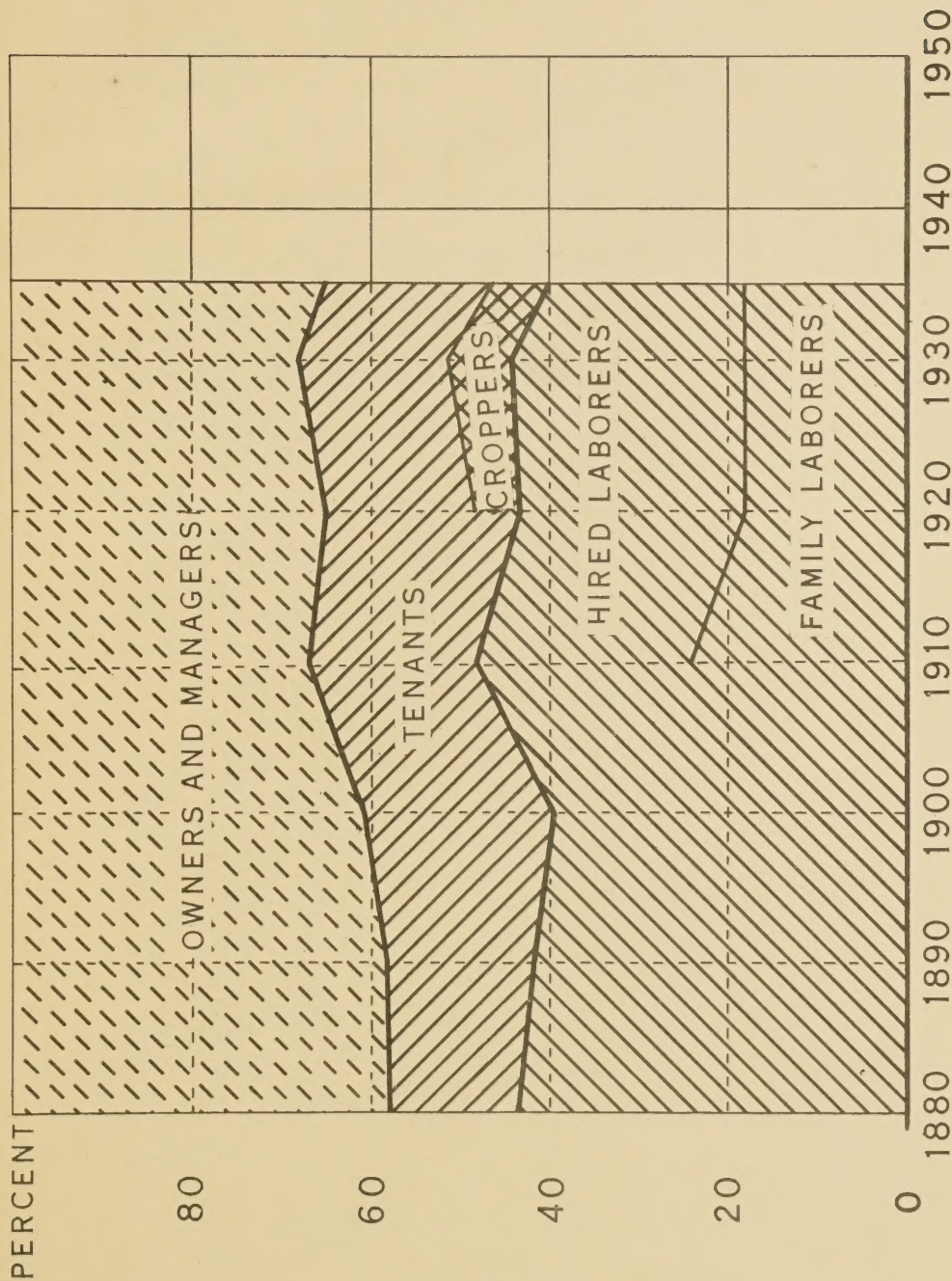
Source of data:

1880-1900: Unpublished manuscript entitled "Farm-Occupied Persons with and without Land:

United States and Regional Trends since 1850," by C. L. Stewart and A. H. Harrington,  
University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois, November 1939.

1910-1935: U. S. Census and U.P.A. National Research Project, "Trends in Employment in Agriculture,  
1909-1936."

# PERCENTAGE IN EACH TENURE CLASS GAINFULLY EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE, UNITED STATES, 1880-1935









## Composition of the Farm Labor Group by States

Owners and tenants (including sharecroppers) made up 57.4 percent of the total working population on the farms of the United States in 1930, unpaid family workers 15.7 percent, wage workers 26 percent. From 1930 to 1935 the proportion of hired workers decreased.

In the Southern States there is a larger proportion of family workers than elsewhere. Especially large proportions of hired workers will be noted in California, Nevada, Arizona, Florida, Maryland, and New Jersey.



Persons gainfully occupied in Agriculture, April 1, 1930\*

| State and<br>geographic<br>divisions | Classes of workers |                |           |                  |             |                     |                |                |      |                  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|-------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|------|------------------|
|                                      | Number             |                |           |                  |             | Percentage of total |                |                |      |                  |
|                                      | Owners             | Managers       | Laborers  |                  | Other       | Owners              | Managers       | Laborers       |      | Other            |
|                                      | and<br>tenants     | and<br>foremen | Wage      | Unpaid<br>family | Occupations | Total               | and<br>tenants | and<br>foremen | Wage | Unpaid<br>family |
| Maine                                | 31,163             | 478            | 16,776    | 3,005            | 97          | 51,519              | 60.5           | 0.9            | 32.6 | 5.8              |
| New Hampshire                        | 12,019             | 406            | 8,941     | 674              | 51          | 22,091              | 54.5           | 1.8            | 40.5 | 3.0              |
| Vermont                              | 20,742             | 390            | 14,781    | 2,179            | 49          | 38,141              | 54.4           | 1.0            | 38.8 | 5.7              |
| Massachusetts                        | 21,125             | 1,487          | 30,347    | 2,472            | 584         | 56,015              | 37.7           | 2.7            | 54.2 | 4.4              |
| Rhode Island                         | 3,001              | 172            | 5,292     | 314              | 94          | 8,873               | 33.8           | 1.9            | 59.6 | 3.6              |
| Connecticut                          | 14,759             | 786            | 19,458    | 1,381            | 303         | 36,687              | 40.3           | 2.1            | 53.0 | 3.8              |
| New England                          | 102,809            | 3,719          | 95,595    | 10,025           | 1,178       | 213,326             | 48.2           | 1.7            | 44.8 | 4.7              |
| New York                             | 148,144            | 3,052          | 103,893   | 11,997           | 893         | 267,979             | 55.3           | 1.1            | 38.8 | 4.5              |
| New Jersey                           | 25,649             | 1,187          | 34,320    | 2,720            | 595         | 64,471              | 39.8           | 1.8            | 53.3 | 4.2              |
| Pennsylvania                         | 145,795            | 2,660          | 84,264    | 18,004           | 720         | 251,443             | 37.9           | 1.1            | 33.5 | 7.2              |
| Middle Atlantic                      | 319,588            | 6,899          | 222,477   | 32,721           | 2,208       | 583,893             | 54.7           | 1.2            | 38.1 | 5.6              |
| Ohio                                 | 200,775            | 2,449          | 89,714    | 18,247           | 1,033       | 312,218             | 64.3           | 0.8            | 28.8 | 5.8              |
| Indiana                              | 166,429            | 1,726          | 65,652    | 15,967           | 376         | 250,150             | 66.5           | 0.7            | 26.2 | 6.4              |
| Illinois                             | 208,435            | 2,737          | 113,234   | 27,345           | 773         | 352,524             | 59.1           | 0.8            | 32.1 | 7.8              |
| Michigan                             | 158,819            | 1,750          | 64,117    | 22,792           | 485         | 247,963             | 64.1           | 0.7            | 25.8 | 9.2              |
| Wisconsin                            | 177,287            | 1,751          | 78,420    | 32,417           | 259         | 290,134             | 61.1           | 0.6            | 27.0 | 11.2             |
| East North Central                   | 911,745            | 10,413         | 411,137   | 116,768          | 2,926       | 1,452,989           | 62.8           | 0.7            | 28.3 | 8.0              |
| Minnesota                            | 183,645            | 1,518          | 77,236    | 41,004           | 419         | 303,822             | 60.5           | 0.5            | 25.4 | 13.5             |
| Iowa                                 | 211,917            | 2,024          | 89,048    | 27,745           | 418         | 331,152             | 64.0           | 0.6            | 26.9 | 8.4              |
| Missouri                             | 246,581            | 2,096          | 82,435    | 39,660           | 479         | 371,251             | 66.4           | 0.6            | 22.2 | 10.7             |
| North Dakota                         | 78,653             | 846            | 38,888    | 15,955           | 109         | 134,451             | 58.5           | 0.6            | 26.9 | 11.9             |
| South Dakota                         | 84,237             | 574            | 32,561    | 13,351           | 63          | 130,786             | 64.5           | 0.4            | 24.9 | 10.2             |
| Nebraska                             | 129,958            | 1,089          | 47,070    | 19,023           | 202         | 197,342             | 65.8           | 0.6            | 23.9 | 9.6              |
| Kansas                               | 162,847            | 1,121          | 46,702    | 18,663           | 211         | 229,544             | 70.9           | 0.5            | 20.4 | 8.1              |
| West North Central                   | 1,097,838          | 9,268          | 413,940   | 175,401          | 1,901       | 1,698,348           | 64.7           | 0.5            | 24.4 | 10.3             |
| Delaware                             | 9,141              | 177            | 6,693     | 1,295            | 35          | 17,341              | 52.7           | 1.0            | 38.6 | 7.5              |
| Maryland                             | 38,632             | 1,135          | 37,830    | 6,447            | 182         | 84,226              | 45.9           | 1.3            | 44.9 | 7.7              |
| District of Columbia                 | 258                | 24             | 780       | 11               | 26          | 1,099               | 21.5           | 2.2            | 71.0 | 1.0              |
| Virginia                             | 150,450            | 2,299          | 81,938    | 35,888           | 261         | 270,836             | 55.6           | 0.8            | 30.3 | 13.2             |
| West Virginia                        | 69,724             | 663            | 29,836    | 17,838           | 51          | 118,162             | 59.0           | 0.6            | 25.3 | 15.1             |
| North Carolina                       | 270,187            | 2,027          | 93,874    | 133,687          | 148         | 499,923             | 54.1           | 0.4            | 18.8 | 26.7             |
| South Carolina                       | 152,224            | 1,427          | 82,286    | 108,598          | 106         | 344,641             | 44.2           | 0.4            | 23.9 | 31.5             |
| Georgia                              | 249,991            | 2,665          | 114,788   | 130,037          | 235         | 497,716             | 50.3           | 0.5            | 23.1 | 26.1             |
| Florida                              | 52,962             | 2,050          | 62,288    | 15,833           | 515         | 133,648             | 39.6           | 1.5            | 46.6 | 11.9             |
| South Atlantic                       | 993,569            | 12,467         | 510,363   | 449,634          | 1,559       | 1,967,592           | 50.5           | 0.6            | 25.9 | 22.9             |
| Kentucky                             | 234,776            | 1,429          | 69,078    | 53,143           | 149         | 358,575             | 65.5           | 0.4            | 19.3 | 14.8             |
| Tennessee                            | 234,627            | 1,283          | 68,784    | 71,784           | 145         | 376,623             | 62.3           | 0.3            | 18.4 | 19.0             |
| Alabama                              | 253,182            | 1,371          | 80,021    | 158,088          | 156         | 492,818             | 51.4           | 0.3            | 16.2 | 32.1             |
| Mississippi                          | 306,885            | 1,641          | 55,071    | 193,357          | 448         | 557,402             | 55.1           | 0.3            | 9.8  | 34.7             |
| East South Central                   | 1,029,470          | 5,724          | 272,954   | 476,372          | 898         | 1,785,418           | 57.6           | 0.3            | 15.3 | 26.7             |
| Arkansas                             | 240,108            | 1,476          | 59,516    | 83,194           | 318         | 384,612             | 62.4           | 0.4            | 15.5 | 21.6             |
| Louisiana                            | 159,260            | 1,912          | 72,057    | 63,414           | 596         | 297,239             | 53.7           | 0.6            | 24.2 | 21.3             |
| Oklahoma                             | 199,486            | 1,327          | 64,852    | 40,321           | 154         | 306,140             | 65.1           | 0.4            | 21.2 | 13.2             |
| Texas                                | 488,697            | 4,490          | 198,760   | 149,236          | 818         | 842,001             | 58.0           | 0.5            | 23.6 | 17.8             |
| West South Central                   | 1,087,551          | 9,205          | 395,185   | 336,165          | 1,886       | 1,829,992           | 59.4           | 0.5            | 21.6 | 18.4             |
| Montana                              | 47,490             | 820            | 25,416    | 5,726            | 226         | 79,678              | 59.6           | 1.0            | 31.9 | 7.2              |
| Idaho                                | 40,199             | 676            | 20,287    | 4,218            | 181         | 65,561              | 61.3           | 1.0            | 31.0 | 6.4              |
| Wyoming                              | 16,210             | 509            | 12,169    | 1,853            | 86          | 30,827              | 52.5           | 1.7            | 39.5 | 6.0              |
| Colorado                             | 58,352             | 1,029          | 38,170    | 8,383            | 300         | 106,234             | 54.9           | 1.0            | 35.9 | 7.9              |
| New Mexico                           | 30,438             | 606            | 22,018    | 5,799            | 110         | 58,971              | 51.6           | 1.0            | 37.3 | 9.9              |
| Arizona                              | 14,497             | 716            | 20,502    | 2,492            | 490         | 38,697              | 37.4           | 1.9            | 53.0 | 6.4              |
| Utah                                 | 24,786             | 451            | 12,446    | 3,513            | 87          | 41,283              | 60.0           | 1.1            | 30.1 | 8.6              |
| Nevada                               | 3,528              | 278            | 4,735     | 347              | 60          | 8,948               | 39.4           | 3.1            | 52.9 | 3.9              |
| Mountain                             | 235,500            | 5,085          | 155,743   | 32,331           | 1,540       | 430,199             | 54.7           | 1.2            | 36.2 | 7.5              |
| Washington                           | 63,336             | 1,336          | 34,313    | 4,920            | 389         | 104,294             | 60.7           | 1.3            | 32.9 | 4.7              |
| Oregon                               | 49,917             | 1,013          | 26,550    | 4,174            | 277         | 82,031              | 60.9           | 1.2            | 32.5 | 5.1              |
| California                           | 126,399            | 8,871          | 188,678   | 6,712            | 3,581       | 334,241             | 37.8           | 2.7            | 56.4 | 2.0              |
| Pacific                              | 239,652            | 11,220         | 249,641   | 15,806           | 4,247       | 520,566             | 46.0           | 2.2            | 48.0 | 3.0              |
| United States                        | 6,017,722          | 74,000         | 2,727,035 | 1,645,223        | 18,343      | 10,482,323          | 57.4           | 0.7            | 26.0 | 15.7             |

\* Source: U. S. Census of Occupations, 1930.

1/ Less than one-tenth of one percent.







## Sharecroppers in the United States

The total number of sharecroppers in 1930 was 776,278; according to the agricultural census of 1935 the number was reduced to 716,000. Although classed as tenants in the Census, their economic and social status is in many respects similar to that of the wage hands, with whom they are constantly changing places, year by year. It will be noted that croppers are proportionately less numerous in Texas and Oklahoma than in the Delta and Eastern cotton areas.

Table 3.- Sharecroppers in the United States, 1930

| State and region   | Number  | Percentage of<br>total farm<br>operators |
|--------------------|---------|--|
| Delaware           | 225     | 2.3                                      |
| Maryland           | 1,646   | 3.8                                      |
| Virginia           | 17,253  | 10.1                                     |
| West Virginia      | 1,834   | 2.2                                      |
| North Carolina     | 69,091  | 24.7                                     |
| South Carolina     | 48,939  | 31.0                                     |
| Georgia            | 100,854 | 39.4                                     |
| Florida            | 4,816   | 8.2                                      |
| South Atlantic     | 244,658 | 23.1                                     |
| Kentucky           | 30,250  | 12.3                                     |
| Tennessee          | 50,304  | 20.5                                     |
| Alabama            | 65,134  | 25.3                                     |
| Mississippi        | 135,293 | 43.3                                     |
| East South Central | 280,981 | 26.5                                     |
| Arkansas           | 75,034  | 31.0                                     |
| Louisiana          | 49,428  | 30.6                                     |
| Oklahoma           | 21,055  | 10.3                                     |
| Texas              | 105,122 | 21.2                                     |
| West South Central | 250,639 | 22.7                                     |
| United States      | 776,278 | 12.3                                     |

Source: 1930 Census.



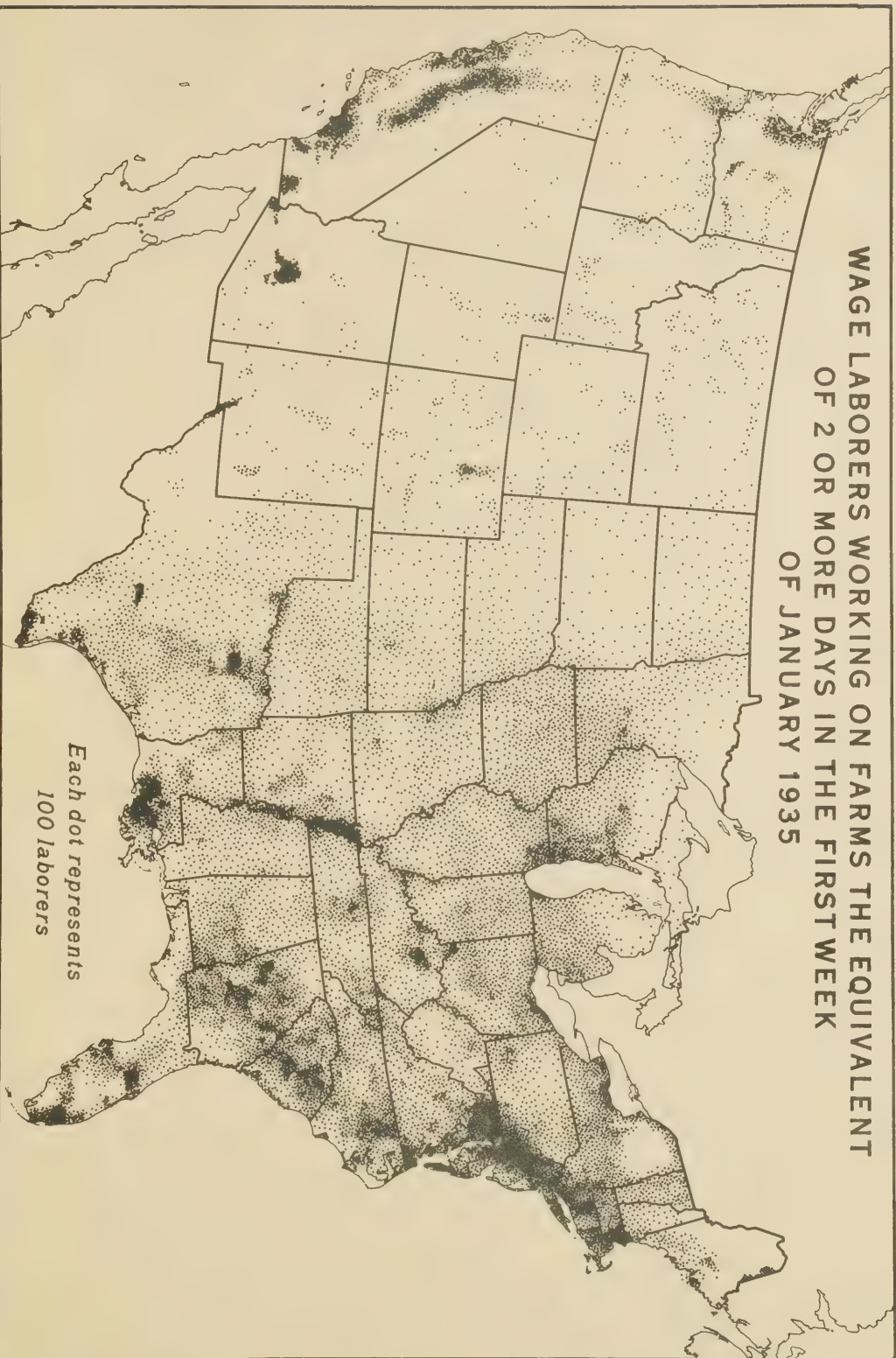




Hiring of wage labor is widely distributed east of the Mountain States, even at the time of low employment when these data were secured, January 1935. Heavy concentrations will be noted in the Salt River district of Arizona, in the Rio Grande, Corpus Christi and Black Prairie districts of Texas, in the sugarcane district of Louisiana, in the Mississippi and Arkansas Delta cotton areas, and in scattered fruit and truck crop districts in Florida and along the Atlantic Coast.

Sharecroppers, who in many respects are not to be distinguished from wage hands, were not included in the Census data on which this map was based. If they had been, the cotton-producing States would show a much heavier labor concentration than appears in this figure.

WAGE LABORERS WORKING ON FARMS THE EQUIVALENT  
OF 2 OR MORE DAYS IN THE FIRST WEEK  
OF JANUARY 1935



*Each dot represents  
100 laborers*







## Farms Hiring Laborers and Numbers Hired

In January 1935 there were 5,844,756 farms which hired no laborers and 967,594 which hired one or more. While 722,645 hired only one laborer, 11,410 hired ten or more laborers. The total number of laborers on these farms hiring ten or more was 244,132. This was 14.84 percent of the total hired laborers in the country. These farms which hired considerable labor per farm were most numerous in the South Atlantic, West South Central and Pacific States.

It should be noted that these data relate to January the month of lowest employment. At the peak of the season, in June, July, or August, there are at least a million additional hired farm laborers.



AND NUMBERS OF LABORERS HIRED, BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION

[illegible]





## Farm Workers in Principal Crop Areas

In Table 5, employment data, as estimated for 1936, are related to the crop areas rather than to geographic subdivisions or States. It will be noted that wage laborers are especially numerous, as compared with family laborers -- which in this table include the farm operator as well as unpaid members of his family who work on the farm, -- in the Range area and the Eastern Dairy area. Hired workers are least important in the cotton and tobacco district of the Middle East, in the three cotton areas, where sharecroppers are numerous, and in the small grain area.

The "miscellaneous" group includes certain States which have higher percentages of hired farm workers than any of those listed, -- e.g., California (43 percent) and Florida (38 percent).



Table 5.- Estimated number of farm workers in principal farming areas of the United States in 1936 1/

| Area                    | : | :           | :              | :             | :           |
|-------------------------|---|-------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
|                         |   |             |                |               |             |
|                         |   | Total       | Family workers | Hired workers |             |
|                         |   | (thousands) | Number         | Percentage    | Number      |
|                         |   |             | (thousands)    | of total      | (thousands) |
|                         |   |             |                | of total      |             |
| Total                   | : | 10,997      | 8,502          | 77            | 2,494       |
| Corn area               | : | 1,235       | 950            | 77            | 285         |
| Eastern dairy area      | : | 737         | 502            | 68            | 235         |
| Western dairy area      | : | 922         | 714            | 77            | 208         |
| Middle eastern area     | : | 1,904       | 1,576          | 83            | 328         |
| Eastern cotton area     | : | 1,383       | 1,091          | 79            | 292         |
| Delta cotton area       | : | 1,342       | 1,099          | 82            | 242         |
| Western cotton area     | : | 1,145       | 909            | 79            | 236         |
| Small grain area        | : | 742         | 606            | 82            | 136         |
| Range area              | : | 308         | 196            | 64            | 112         |
| Northwestern area       | : | 292         | 212            | 73            | 80          |
| Miscellaneous <u>2/</u> | : | 987         | 647            | 66            | 340         |

1/ Data are from U. S. Works Progress Administration, National Research Project, Report No. A-8: Trends in Employment in Agriculture, 1909-36.

2/ California, Missouri, Florida, Delaware, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Maine.

Source: Three Decades of Farm Labor, by Witt Bowden, from the Monthly Labor Review, June, July, and August 1939 issues.





## Proportions of Hired Workers, 1909-1936

Hired workers were .23 percent of the total number of farm workers in 1909; from 1926 to 1930 they were 26 percent; in 1935 they had fallen to 22 percent. The percentage of hired farm workers decreased from 1909 to 1936 in the Corn, Eastern Dairy, Middle Eastern, Delta Cotton, Small Grain, Range, and Northwestern areas; it remained the same in the Western Dairy area; in the Eastern and Western Cotton areas the percentage increased.



Table 6.- Hired farm workers as percentages of total agricultural workers,  
by area, 1909-36 <sup>1/</sup>

| Year: | United:<br>States: | Corn:<br>dairy | Eastern:<br>dairy | Western:<br>dairy | Middle<br>eastern: | Eastern:<br>cotton | Delta<br>cotton: | Western:<br>cotton: | Small:<br>grain: | Range: | North-<br>western: |
|-------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------|--------------------|
| 1909  | 23                 | 26             | 35                | 23                | 20                 | 18                 | 19               | 19                  | 23               | 40     | 33                 |
| 1910  | 24                 | 26             | 35                | 23                | 21                 | 18                 | 19               | 20                  | 23               | 40     | 33                 |
| 1911  | 24                 | 26             | 35                | 23                | 20                 | 18                 | 19               | 20                  | 23               | 40     | 33                 |
| 1912  | 24                 | 26             | 35                | 24                | 21                 | 18                 | 19               | 21                  | 23               | 40     | 33                 |
| 1913  | 24                 | 26             | 35                | 24                | 21                 | 18                 | 19               | 21                  | 23               | 40     | 33                 |
| 1914  | 24                 | 27             | 35                | 24                | 21                 | 18                 | 19               | 22                  | 23               | 40     | 33                 |
| 1915  | 24                 | 27             | 35                | 24                | 21                 | 18                 | 19               | 22                  | 23               | 41     | 32                 |
| 1916  | 25                 | 27             | 35                | 24                | 21                 | 18                 | 19               | 22                  | 23               | 41     | 33                 |
| 1917  | 25                 | 27             | 35                | 25                | 21                 | 18                 | 19               | 23                  | 23               | 41     | 32                 |
| 1918  | 24                 | 28             | 35                | 25                | 21                 | 18                 | 19               | 23                  | 23               | 41     | 32                 |
| 1919  | 25                 | 28             | 35                | 25                | 21                 | 18                 | 19               | 23                  | 23               | 41     | 32                 |
| 1920  | 25                 | 28             | 35                | 25                | 21                 | 18                 | 19               | 24                  | 23               | 41     | 32                 |
| 1921  | 25                 | 28             | 35                | 26                | 21                 | 19                 | 19               | 24                  | 24               | 41     | 32                 |
| 1922  | 25                 | 27             | 35                | 26                | 21                 | 19                 | 19               | 24                  | 24               | 41     | 32                 |
| 1923  | 25                 | 27             | 35                | 27                | 21                 | 19                 | 18               | 24                  | 24               | 40     | 31                 |
| 1924  | 25                 | 27             | 34                | 27                | 21                 | 20                 | 17               | 24                  | 24               | 40     | 30                 |
| 1925  | 25                 | 28             | 33                | 27                | 20                 | 20                 | 16               | 23                  | 25               | 39     | 29                 |
| 1926  | 26                 | 29             | 35                | 30                | 21                 | 22                 | 18               | 24                  | 26               | 40     | 30                 |
| 1927  | 26                 | 29             | 35                | 29                | 20                 | 23                 | 17               | 23                  | 27               | 40     | 28                 |
| 1928  | 26                 | 29             | 35                | 29                | 21                 | 21                 | 17               | 23                  | 27               | 39     | 31                 |
| 1929  | 26                 | 29             | 35                | 28                | 22                 | 23                 | 16               | 25                  | 26               | 39     | 32                 |
| 1930  | 26                 | 28             | 36                | 27                | 21                 | 21                 | 16               | 23                  | 26               | 38     | 30                 |
| 1931  | 24                 | 26             | 34                | 25                | 19                 | 20                 | 15               | 21                  | 25               | 36     | 30                 |
| 1932  | 23                 | 23             | 33                | 24                | 18                 | 20                 | 14               | 21                  | 23               | 34     | 25                 |
| 1933  | 22                 | 22             | 33                | 23                | 17                 | 20                 | 16               | 19                  | 21               | 36     | 25                 |
| 1934  | 22                 | 21             | 32                | 22                | 16                 | 20                 | 17               | 19                  | 19               | 35     | 26                 |
| 1935  | 22                 | 23             | 31                | 22                | 17                 | 21                 | 17               | 19                  | 20               | 36     | 27                 |
| 1936  | 23                 | 23             | 32                | 23                | 17                 | 21                 | 18               | 21                  | 18               | 36     | 27                 |

<sup>1/</sup> Data are from U. S. Works Progress Administration, National Research Project,  
Report No. A-8, p. 78.





Numbers of Hired Laborers on Farms, by States, January 1935

Of the 967,594 hired farm workers reported as working the equivalent of two or more days during the first week of January 1935, 722,645 were on farms on which only one worker was hired, 130,410 were on farms on which three workers were hired, 30,672 were on farms hiring eight workers each, and 244,132 were on farms hiring ten or more each. Of this total on the large-scale farms, 53,116 were in the South Atlantic States, mostly Florida, with 25,609; 66,448 were in the West South Central States, in which Louisiana and Texas had the largest numbers, and 47,737 were in California. It should be noted that when this Census was taken employment, in most areas, was at its minimum.



Numbers of hired laborers on farms reporting specified numbers of hired laborers working the equivalent of two or more days in the first week of January, 1935

|                      | Number of laborers on farms reporting hired laborers of the following numbers |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |             |           | Farms              |                             | Total     |
|----------------------|---|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
|                      | One   | Two     | Three   | Four   | Five   | Six    | Seven  | Eight  | Nine   | Ten or more | Total     | Hiring no laborers | Hiring one or more laborers |           |
|                      | Number  | Number  | Number  | Number | Number | Number | Number | Number | Number | Number      | Number    | Number             | Number                      | Number    |
| United States        | 722,445   | 275,340 | 130,410 | 89,944 | 62,665 | 49,320 | 26,110 | 30,672 | 14,344 | 244,132     | 1,445,602 | 5,844,756          | 967,594                     | 6,812,350 |
| New England          |   |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |             |           |                    |                             |           |
| Maine                | 26,716  | 12,176  | 5,925   | 3,776  | 2,440  | 1,866  | 1,050  | 1,008  | 693    | 7,790       | 63,440    | 120,962            | 37,279                      | 158,214   |
| New Hampshire        | 6,156   | 2,126   | 963     | 672    | 400    | 306    | 140    | 136    | 63     | 1,790       | 11,440    | 33,993             | 7,911                       | 41,907    |
| Vermont              | 2,985   | 1,246   | 576     | 348    | 200    | 84     | 70     | 72     | 34     | 432         | 6,067     | 13,701             | 3,994                       | 17,695    |
| Massachusetts        | 6,489   | 2,990   | 699     | 352    | 200    | 174    | 105    | 80     | 36     | 397         | 10,282    | 18,984             | 6,077                       | 27,061    |
| Rhode Island         | 5,460   | 3,518   | 2,073   | 1,452  | 990    | 888    | 427    | 456    | 90     | 3,708       | 19,247    | 26,120             | 6,974                       | 35,094    |
| Connecticut          | 710   | 470     | 270     | 176    | 135    | 135    | 66     | 96     | 30     | 481         | 2,536     | 3,160              | 1,167                       | 4,327     |
| Total                | 4,916   | 2,526   | 1,344   | 776    | 555    | 348    | 266    | 168    | 135    | 2,294       | 13,328    | 25,004             | 7,153                       | 32,157    |
| Middle Atlantic      |   |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |             |           |                    |                             |           |
| New York             | 72,715  | 26,318  | 11,307  | 6,388  | 4,020  | 3,045  | 1,715  | 1,896  | 846    | 10,848      | 139,065   | 304,015            | 93,669                      | 397,684   |
| New Jersey           | 37,744  | 12,568  | 5,604   | 2,924  | 1,660  | 1,266  | 784    | 864    | 351    | 3,396       | 67,751    | 129,194            | 47,631                      | 177,821   |
| Pennsylvania         | 29,115  | 9,380   | 4,101   | 2,176  | 1,795  | 1,558  | 322    | 336    | 144    | 2,944       | 17,182    | 20,497             | 8,978                       | 29,375    |
| Total                | 29,115  | 9,380   | 4,101   | 2,176  | 1,795  | 1,558  | 322    | 336    | 144    | 2,944       | 54,132    | 154,324            | 36,960                      | 191,284   |
| East North Central   |   |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |             |           |                    |                             |           |
| Ohio                 | 146,928   | 56,580  | 12,717  | 6,132  | 3,805  | 3,024  | 1,743  | 1,896  | 711    | 8,948       | 224,444   | 908,291            | 175,296                     | 1,083,687 |
| Indiana              | 30,394  | 7,986   | 3,045   | 1,662  | 1,950  | 1,606  | 800    | 418    | 180    | 3,442       | 49,537    | 218,627            | 36,519                      | 255,146   |
| Illinois             | 22,677  | 5,404   | 2,007   | 1,040  | 810    | 606    | 280    | 312    | 108    | 1,026       | 34,070    | 174,156            | 26,679                      | 200,835   |
| Michigan             | 32,445  | 7,800   | 2,838   | 1,340  | 810    | 598    | 371    | 352    | 90     | 1,026       | 49,534    | 192,985            | 38,327                      | 231,312   |
| Wisconsin            | 26,075  | 5,662   | 1,184   | 576    | 865    | 576    | 322    | 322    | 225    | 1,390       | 39,192    | 166,076            | 16,167                      | 182,243   |
| Minnesota            | 37,136  | 9,728   | 2,577   | 872    | 470    | 348    | 189    | 192    | 108    | 2,294       | 52,351    | 156,347            | 43,330                      | 199,677   |
| West North Central   |   |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |             |           |                    |                             |           |
| Minnesota            | 132,637   | 31,238  | 11,196  | 6,300  | 3,795  | 2,424  | 1,435  | 1,448  | 648    | 5,077       | 196,158   | 1,024,116          | 155,440                     | 1,179,556 |
| Iowa                 | 29,235  | 5,678   | 1,641   | 772    | 440    | 222    | 217    | 120    | 81     | 1,418       | 39,846    | 170,285            | 33,019                      | 203,302   |
| Missouri             | 35,950  | 6,926   | 2,418   | 1,040  | 595    | 342    | 151    | 168    | 54     | 1,118       | 48,592    | 181,540            | 40,646                      | 221,936   |
| North Dakota         | 22,927  | 6,592   | 2,232   | 1,105  | 542    | 497    | 288    | 288    | 288    | 1,937       | 10,152    | 249,599            | 28,956                      | 278,454   |
| South Dakota         | 9,176   | 2,526   | 714     | 393    | 180    | 102    | 119    | 128    | 81     | 458         | 13,405    | 72,127             | 10,879                      | 84,006    |
| Nebraska             | 5,969   | 1,284   | 393     | 148    | 110    | 66     | 42     | 24     | 27     | 116         | 8,300     | 48,170             | 6,853                       | 55,023    |
| Kansas               | 13,703  | 3,358   | 1,167   | 544    | 335    | 288    | 175    | 128    | 45     | 557         | 20,300    | 117,513            | 16,103                      | 133,616   |
| Total                | 15,677  | 4,874   | 1,896   | 1,156  | 760    | 462    | 224    | 192    | 72     | 721         | 26,034    | 155,224            | 19,365                      | 174,589   |
| South Atlantic       |   |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |             |           |                    |                             |           |
| Delaware             | 126,062   | 63,404  | 33,228  | 25,180 | 17,040 | 14,274 | 7,220  | 9,184  | 4,014  | 58,116      | 358,175   | 960,518            | 166,635                     | 1,117,153 |
| Maryland             | 1,480   | 207     | 1,440   | 120    | 110    | 570    | 364    | 408    | 180    | 1,418       | 3,057     | 8,448              | 1,898                       | 10,346    |
| District of Columbia | 9,975   | 5,274   | 2,160   | 1,096  | 865    | 570    | 364    | 408    | 180    | 1,418       | 22,973    | 30,279             | 14,133                      | 44,412    |
| Virginia             | 20  | 20      | 12      | 16     | 5      | -      | -      | -      | 9      | 175         | 257       | 44                 | 15                          | 190       |
| West Virginia        | 23,109  | 10,812  | 5,238   | 3,188  | 2,010  | 1,734  | 770    | 928    | 576    | 3,945       | 58,310    | 156,353            | 32,279                      | 188,632   |
| North Carolina       | 7,930   | 3,784   | 1,380   | 856    | 570    | 504    | 126    | 132    | 45     | 3,305       | 15,032    | 94,333             | 10,444                      | 104,777   |
| South Carolina       | 29,480  | 11,328  | 5,280   | 3,696  | 2,600  | 1,918  | 1,095  | 1,128  | 441    | 2,375       | 59,321    | 261,804            | 39,163                      | 290,967   |
| Georgia              | 15,500  | 5,457   | 2,176   | 1,152  | 3,390  | 1,918  | 1,316  | 1,278  | 954    | 6,593       | 33,140    | 139,737            | 27,779                      | 167,516   |
| Florida              | 26,497  | 15,238  | 9,156   | 7,592  | 5,205  | 4,482  | 2,345  | 3,056  | 549    | 16,649      | 91,458    | 207,642            | 20,215                      | 227,863   |
| Total                | 12,071  | 7,280   | 4,358   | 3,700  | 2,205  | 2,238  | 1,111  | 1,166  | 549    | 25,669      | 60,627    | 52,642             | 20,215                      | 72,857    |
| East South Central   |   |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |             |           |                    |                             |           |
| Kentucky             | 66,598  | 29,942  | 14,992  | 11,448 | 8,120  | 6,084  | 2,888  | 3,528  | 1,647  | 14,928      | 160,025   | 1,043,315          | 93,904                      | 1,137,219 |
| Tennessee            | 16,240  | 7,558   | 3,499   | 2,484  | 1,194  | 1,194  | 553    | 448    | 270    | 2,114       | 36,915    | 254,679            | 23,449                      | 278,128   |
| Alabama              | 18,639  | 8,128   | 3,499   | 2,484  | 1,194  | 1,194  | 553    | 448    | 270    | 2,114       | 36,915    | 254,679            | 23,449                      | 278,128   |
| Mississippi          | 8,284   | 4,275   | 1,975   | 1,064  | 564    | 2,484  | 1,194  | 448    | 270    | 2,114       | 36,915    | 254,679            | 23,449                      | 278,128   |
| Total                | 11,713  | 5,952   | 3,075   | 2,168  | 1,230  | 1,602  | 698    | 992    | 361    | 6,126       | 35,542    | 293,904            | 27,779                      | 321,683   |
| West South Central   |   |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |             |           |                    |                             |           |
| Arkansas             | 81,766  | 40,266  | 21,344  | 15,936 | 11,975 | 9,258  | 4,403  | 5,704  | 2,286  | 66,448      | 299,426   | 1,016,132          | 121,439                     | 1,137,571 |
| Louisiana            | 10,010  | 5,388   | 3,111   | 2,512  | 2,090  | 1,704  | 753    | 1,136  | 369    | 13,201      | 39,974    | 237,074            | 15,939                      | 253,013   |
| Oklahoma             | 10,959  | 6,170   | 4,023   | 3,168  | 2,295  | 2,022  | 1,043  | 1,336  | 513    | 25,305      | 36,416    | 192,697            | 17,579                      | 210,276   |
| Texas                | 15,927  | 6,170   | 2,892   | 1,848  | 1,340  | 900    | 377    | 336    | 171    | 1,305       | 31,444    | 152,249            | 21,076                      | 233,325   |
| Total                | 15,770  | 22,054  | 11,368  | 8,408  | 6,230  | 4,932  | 2,240  | 2,696  | 1,233  | 26,641      | 131,592   | 434,172            | 66,445                      | 500,617   |
| Mountain             |   |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |             |           |                    |                             |           |
| Montana              | 26,287  | 13,280  | 6,990   | 5,044  | 3,775  | 3,114  | 1,995  | 1,704  | 828    | 21,124      | 84,411    | 232,111            | 39,281                      | 271,392   |
| Idaho                | 5,468   | 2,580   | 1,221   | 956    | 595    | 540    | 280    | 232    | 108    | 1,325       | 13,583    | 42,747             | 7,817                       | 50,564    |
| Wyoming              | 4,012   | 1,724   | 807     | 528    | 390    | 306    | 175    | 176    | 72     | 1,282       | 8,632     | 29,618             | 5,485                       | 35,103    |
| Colorado             | 2,182   | 762     | 480     | 480    | 350    | 330    | 231    | 184    | 45     | 2,987       | 7,001     | 44,095             | 11,113                      | 55,208    |
| New Mexico           | 6,402   | 3,004   | 1,626   | 1,192  | 760    | 546    | 448    | 266    | 146    | 1,282       | 13,220    | 44,446             | 9,158                       | 53,604    |
| Arizona              | 3,694   | 1,987   | 1,088   | 776    | 610    | 492    | 280    | 232    | 144    | 1,282       | 11,384    | 37,749             | 5,680                       | 17,429    |
| Utah                 | 2,351   | 1,400   | 888     | 632    | 610    | 528    | 343    | 466    | 135    | 1,282       | 11,384    | 37,749             | 5,680                       | 17,429    |
| Nevada               | 1,465   | 1,020   | 477     | 477    | 360    | 258    | 175    | 112    | 81     | 755         | 2,182     | 26,067             | 2,608                       | 28,675    |
| Total                | 503   | 332     | 222     | 160    | 120    | 114    | 63     | 56     | 81     | 395         | 2,466     | 2,614              | 882                         | 3,496     |
| Pacific              |   |         |         |        |        |        |        |        |        |             |           |                    |                             |           |
| Washington           | 41,008  | 21,660  | 12,711  | 9,740  | 7,695  | 6,222  | 3,731  | 4,384  | 2,644  | 50,923      | 160,728   | 234,896            | 44,671                      | 279,567   |
| Oregon               | 7,361   | 3,344   | 1,896   | 1,180  | 815    | 570    | 392    | 312    | 245    | 1,431       | 17,568    | 73,936             | 10,445                      | 84,381    |
| California           | 27,424  | 15,580  | 9,390   | 7,412  | 6,240  | 4,998  | 2,992  | 3,760  | 2,214  | 1,725       | 127,873   | 50,928             | 15,458                      | 143,331   |
| Total                | 75,793  | 40,584  | 24,000  | 18,332 | 14,710 | 11,790 | 7,115  | 8,458  | 5,101  | 53,081      | 199,169   | 359,760            | 60,574                      | 420,334   |





## Hired Workers on the Larger Farms in the Crop Areas

This table relates the employment data from the Census of January 1935 to the principal crop areas. The cotton areas show a high percentage of their hired labor on farms hiring four or more and also on those hiring eight or more. This is a reflection of the plantation system. The Range area showed a relatively high proportion of its hired workers on the larger farms. In the Corn area the farms hiring ten or more accounted for few of the hired laborers at this time of the year. In the Eastern Dairy area a larger proportion of the hired workers were on the larger farms than in the Western Dairy area.

In the miscellaneous group, which included California and Florida, half the hired workers were on farms hiring four or more and a third on farms hiring ten or more.

Sharecroppers were not included in these figures.

Table 8.- Distribution of hired farm laborers in principal farming areas by number of laborers employed per farm, January 1935 <sup>1/</sup>

| Area                        | : Number of  | : Number of | :           | Percentage of hired |        |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|--------|
|                             | : farms re-  | : farms re- | : Total     | laborers on farms   |        |
|                             | : porting no | : porting   | : number of | reporting--         |        |
|                             | : hired      | : hired     | : hired     | : 4 or              | : 8 or |
|                             | : laborers   | : laborers  | : laborers  | : more              | : more |
| United States               | : 5,844,756  | 967,594     | 1,645,602   | 31.4                | 17.6   |
| Corn                        | : 767,108    | 142,171     | 181,433     | 11.9                | 5.3    |
| Eastern dairy               | : 367,327    | 112,989     | 171,347     | 22.1                | 10.7   |
| Western dairy               | : 492,906    | 106,790     | 130,339     | 8.0                 | 3.0    |
| Middle eastern              | : 1,055,043  | 144,885     | 226,304     | 23.1                | 8.3    |
| Eastern cotton              | : 593,761    | 95,742      | 192,670     | 40.9                | 19.2   |
| Delta cotton                | : 635,615    | 51,297      | 131,932     | 54.5                | 37.4   |
| Western cotton              | : 626,421    | 87,921      | 163,036     | 36.1                | 20.0   |
| Small grain                 | : 465,681    | 60,997      | 81,561      | 14.1                | 4.9    |
| Range                       | : 149,746    | 25,969      | 61,806      | 50.3                | 33.9   |
| Northwestern                | : 169,612    | 24,708      | 41,667      | 28.9                | 12.3   |
| Miscellaneous <sup>2/</sup> | : 473,536    | 114,125     | 263,457     | 49.7                | 34.0   |

<sup>1/</sup> Data are from Monthly Labor Review, September 1937: "Distribution of Hired Farm Laborers in the United States." The information was derived from the special Agricultural Census of 1935. Employment during most of the year is normally larger than in January.

<sup>2/</sup> Maine, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, Florida, Missouri, California.

Source: Three Decades of Farm Labor, by Witt Bowden, from the Monthly Labor Review, June, July, and August 1939 issues.

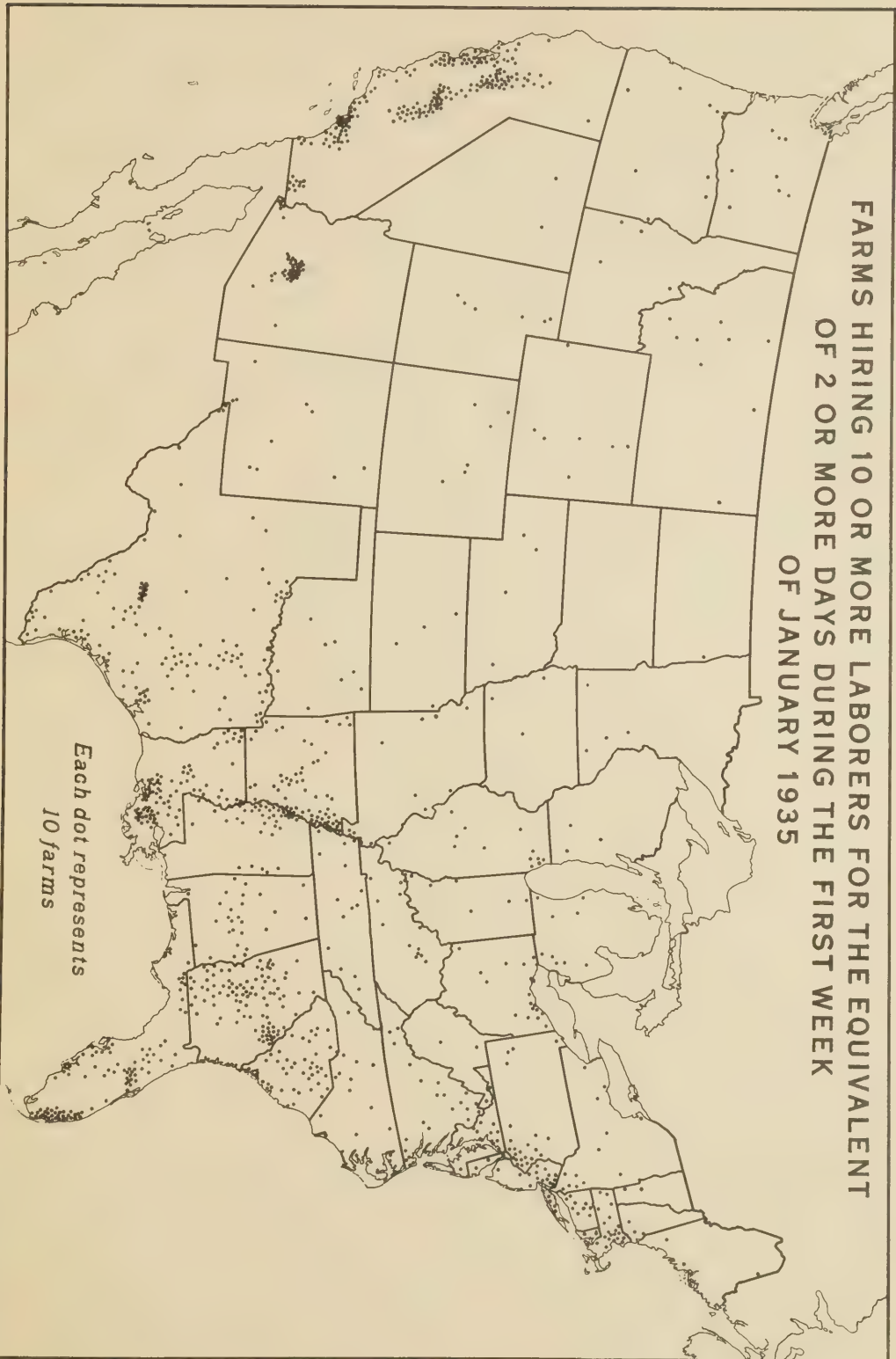






This map will serve to indicate the location of the farms which hire labor in greatest number. The distribution is similar to that of the so-called "large-scale farms." Prominent among them are truck and fruit farms, cotton plantations, crop specialty farms, such as those specializing in sugarcane, sugar beets, beans, tobacco, potatoes and hay, eastern dairy farms and stock ranches. A similar map for summer would show probably twice as many farms hiring 10 or more laborers. In summer in these areas the concentration of laborers would be more pronounced; and in addition their numbers in many all parts of the country would be decidedly larger.

**FARMS HIRING 10 OR MORE LABORERS FOR THE EQUIVALENT  
OF 2 OR MORE DAYS DURING THE FIRST WEEK  
OF JANUARY 1935**







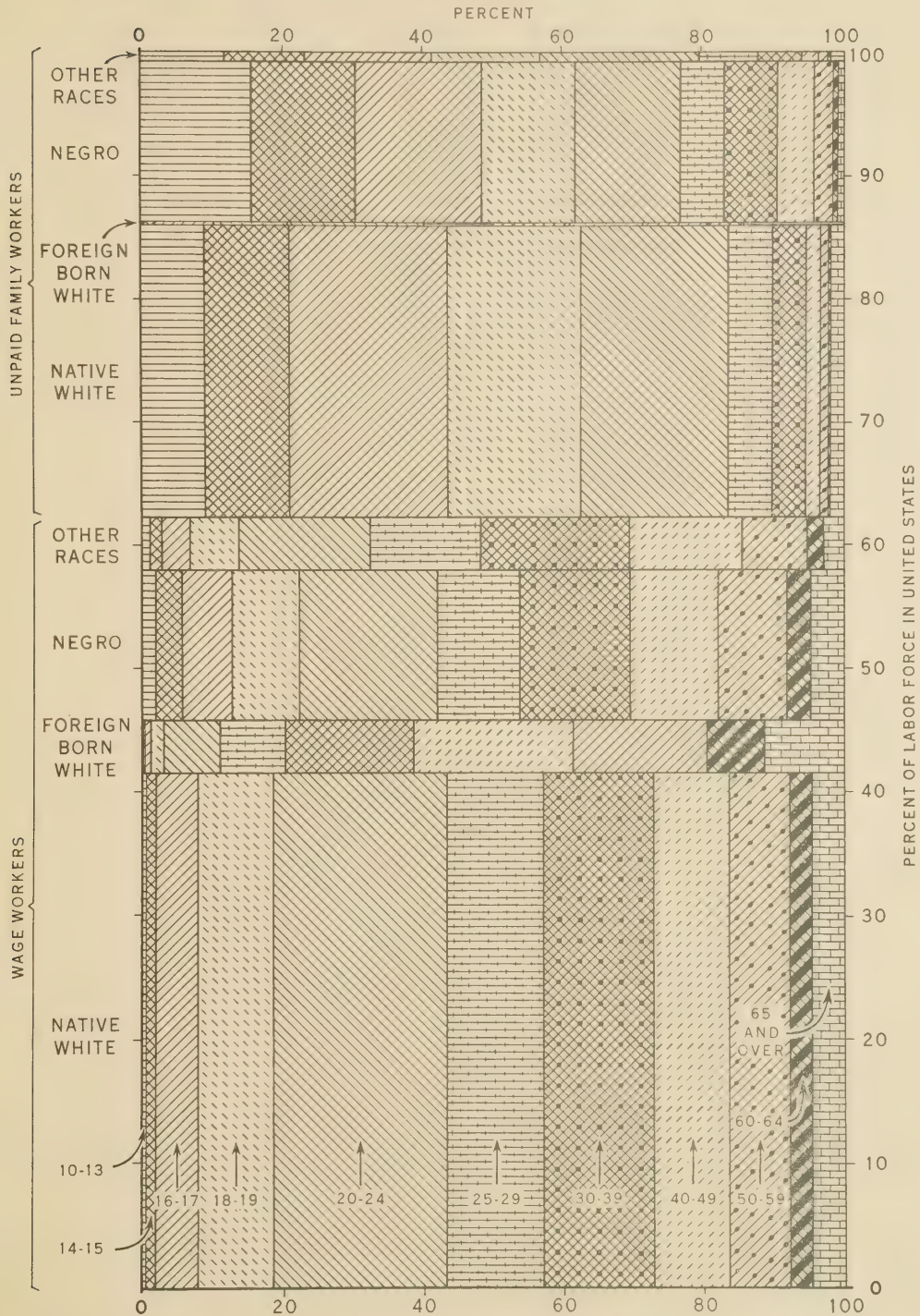


It appears from this figure that in 1930, of the wage workers, 66.69 percent were native white persons, 19.73 percent were Negro, and 6.79 were foreign-born whites, as compared with similar percentages of 62.74, 34.53, 0.83 for the unpaid family workers.

At this time the unpaid workers were 37.8 percent and the hired workers 62.2 percent of the total of both groups. By the time of the Census of 1935 the family workers were much more numerous than the wage workers.

The comparative youthfulness of the unpaid family workers, as compared with the hired workers, is apparent. Over 60 percent of the former group were under 20 years of age, as compared with 20 percent of the wage laborers. Very little of the child labor in agriculture appears among the hired group.

# PERCENTAGES OF FARM LABORERS BY WAGE STATUS, RACE, AND AGE, UNITED STATES, 1930







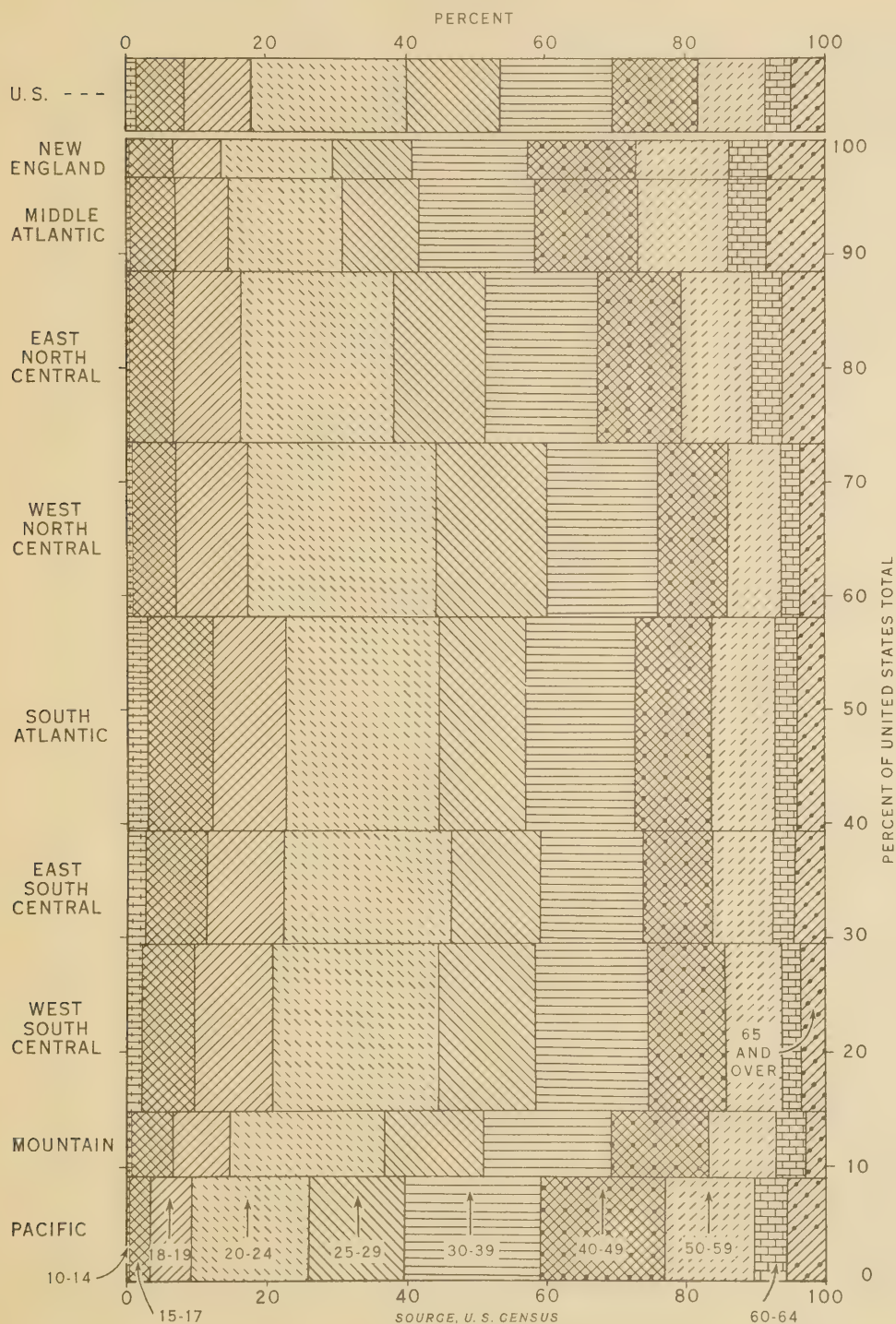
## Age and Distribution of Hired Farm Laborers

This chart illustrates the wide distribution of hired farm laborers throughout the country, the Pacific States having 9.19 percent of the total, the South Atlantic 18.71, the West North Central 15.17, the East North Central 15.08, the West South Central 14.48, the East South Central 9.97, the Middle Atlantic 8.17, the Mountain States 5.72, and the New England States 3.52.

From the data here presented it appears that less than a fifth of the total male and female wage workers were under 20 and about one-half under 30. It also appears from the chart that the hired laborers tend to be somewhat older in the New England, Middle Atlantic, Mountain and Pacific subdivisions than elsewhere. In the South Central, South Atlantic and Pacific regions there is a high proportion of workers over 50.



# PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HIRED FARM LABORERS BY GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS AND BY AGE, 1930









## The Families of Hired Farm Workers-

Tables 9 and 10 present data gathered in 1936 in eleven counties in the first States listed and in three counties in New Jersey. About half of the hired farm laborers were or had been married, although there was considerable variation as between States. Nearly half the laborers in the 11-county study had dependents, consisting, typically, of a wife and two children. Fewer of the New Jersey workers had dependents and their families were smaller by one person. This is because the surveys in the 11 counties included only adult laborers or those doing the work of adults. The New Jersey survey data included some workers who were still below adult age.

# Marital Status of Hired Farm Laborers in 12 States, 1936

Source, Survey data, Bureau of Agricultural Economics

| State        | Numbers of persons |         |                           |        | Percentages |         |                          |
|--------------|--------------------|---------|---------------------------|--------|-------------|---------|--------------------------|
|              | Unmarried          | Married | Separated,<br>or divorced | Total  | Unmarried   | Married | Separated or<br>divorced |
|              |                    |         |                           |        |             |         |                          |
|              |                    |         |                           |        |             |         |                          |
|              | Number             | Number  | Number                    | Number | Percent     | Percent | Percent                  |
| California   | 60                 | 158     | 16                        | 234    | 25.7        | 67.5    | 6.8                      |
| Colorado     | 40                 | 23      | 3                         | 66     | 60.6        | 34.9    | 4.5                      |
| Illinois     | 123                | 101     | 7                         | 231    | 53.3        | 43.7    | 3.0                      |
| Iowa         | 150                | 69      | 5                         | 224    | 67.0        | 30.8    | 2.2                      |
| Kansas       | 113                | 52      | 7                         | 172    | 65.7        | 30.2    | 4.1                      |
| Kentucky     | 93                 | 166     | 37                        | 296    | 31.4        | 56.1    | 12.5                     |
| Louisiana    | 46                 | 144     | 53                        | 243    | 18.9        | 59.3    | 21.8                     |
| Minnesota    | 192                | 12      | 3                         | 207    | 92.8        | 5.8     | 1.4                      |
| Pennsylvania | 148                | 54      | 12                        | 214    | 69.2        | 25.2    | 5.6                      |
| Tennessee    | 68                 | 90      | 4                         | 162    | 42.0        | 55.5    | 2.5                      |
| Texas        | 78                 | 230     | 17                        | 325    | 24.0        | 70.8    | 5.2                      |
| New Jersey   | 708                | 483     | 53                        | 1244   | 56.9        | 38.8    | 4.3                      |



Source - Survey data, Bureau of Agricultural Economics

1/ Approximate only because published data have a class of "---- or more"

1/ Approximate only because published data have a class of "---- or more"



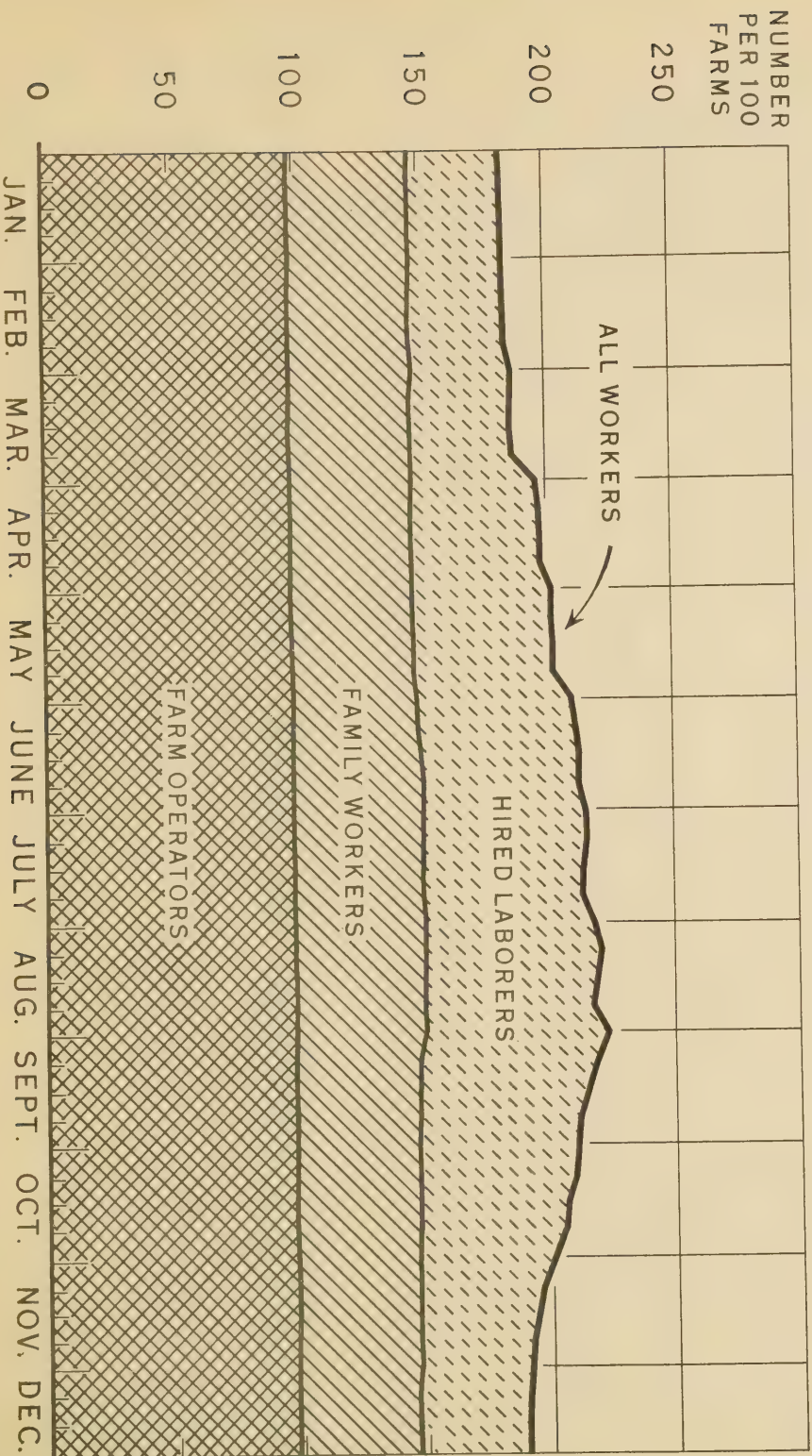




Hunterdon is a county in which dairying and general farming predominate; Monmouth County has truck and general farming, while in Gloucester County, truck-growing establishments predominate. It is apparent from these figures that seasonality of employment is much more marked in the truck crop district than in either of the other two and that it is least in the dairying and general farming area. This applies particularly to wage labor, and to some extent to unpaid family labor. Seasonal fluctuations in employment of wage laborers are known to be even more pronounced in some other areas.

# WORKERS PER 100 FARMS IN HUNTERDON COUNTY, N. J., 1935 BY QUARTER MONTH PERIODS

DAIRY AND GENERAL FARMING PREDOMINATE

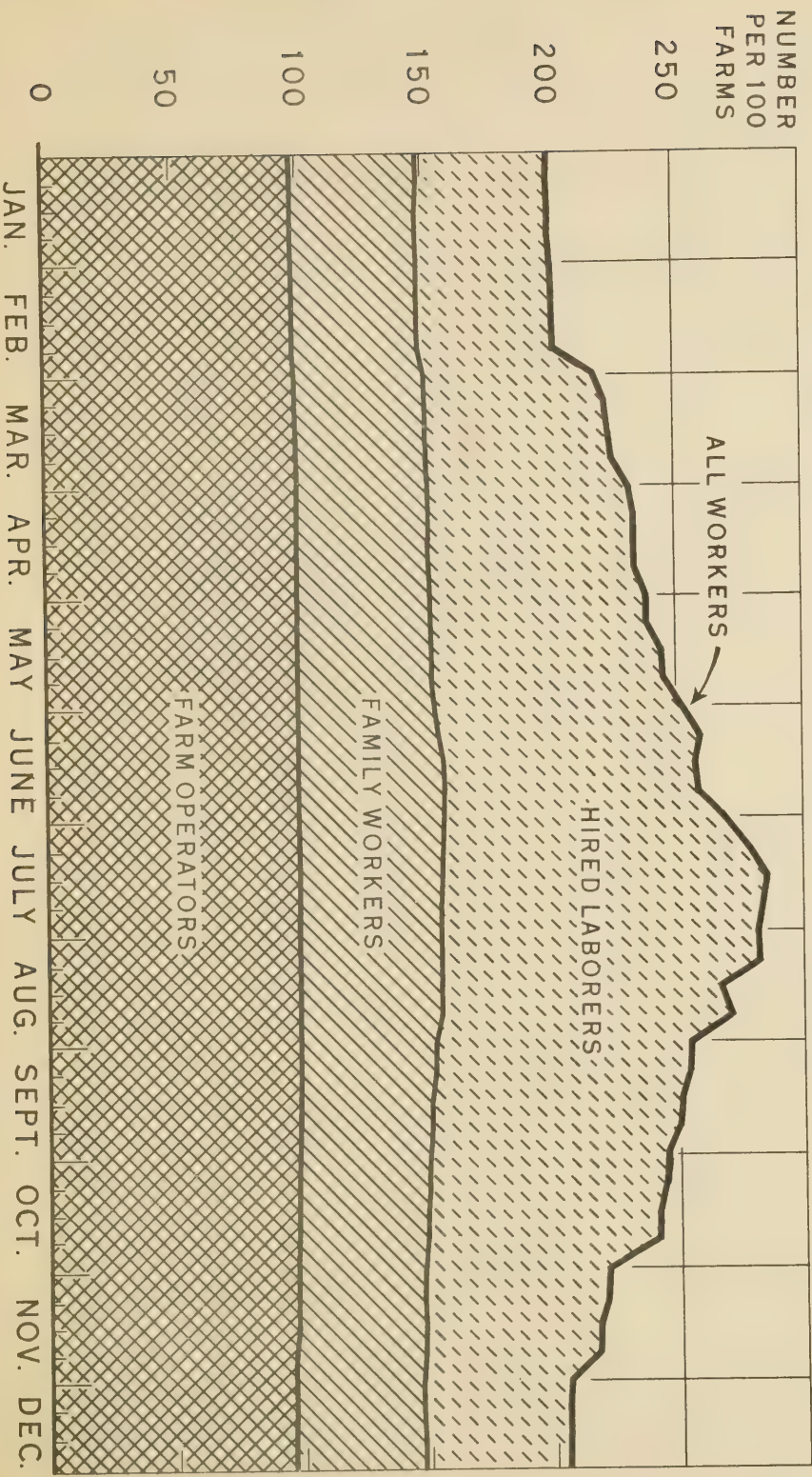






# WORKERS PER 100 FARMS IN MONMOUTH COUNTY, N. J., 1935 BY QUARTER MONTH PERIODS

TRUCK AND GENERAL FARMING PREDOMINATE

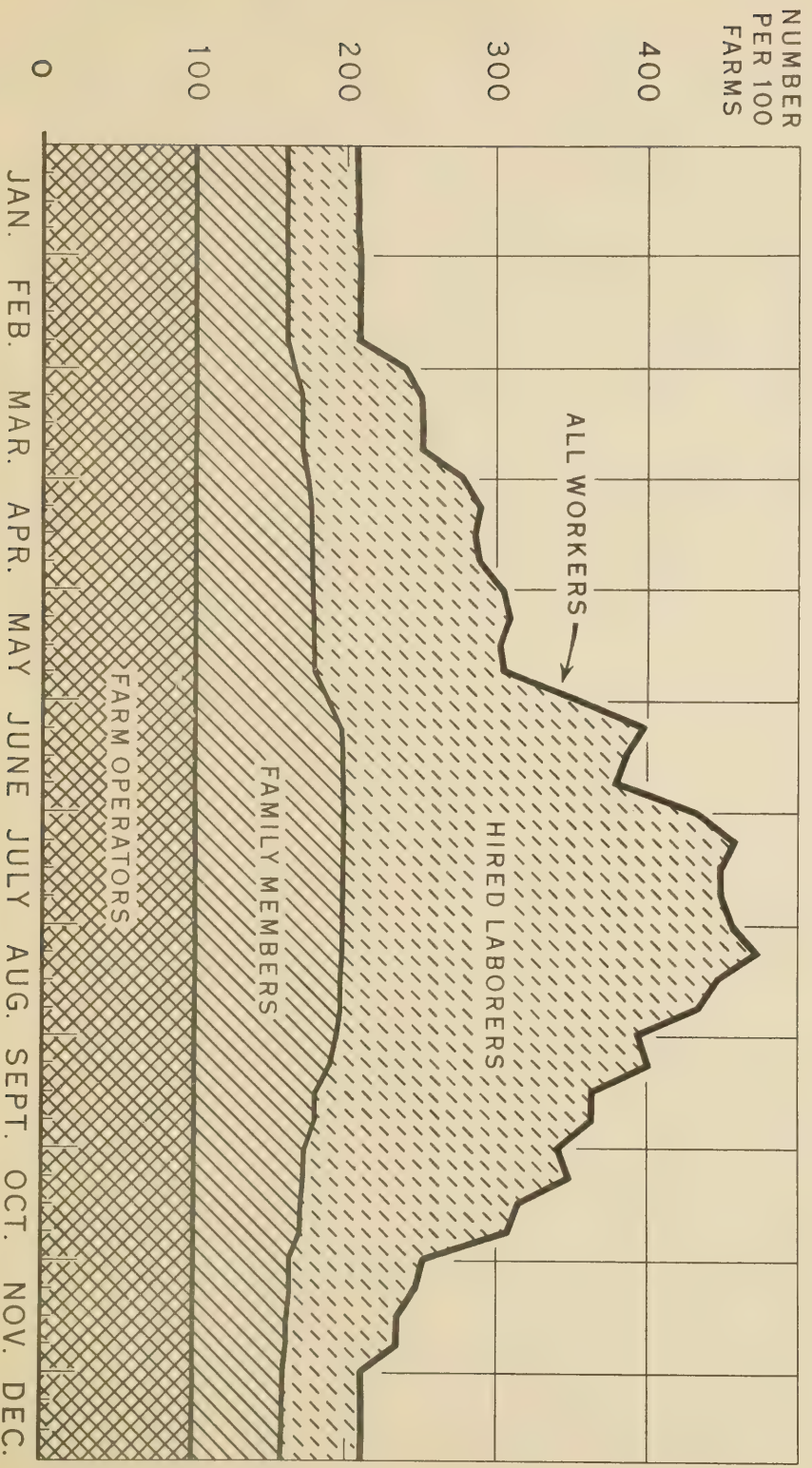




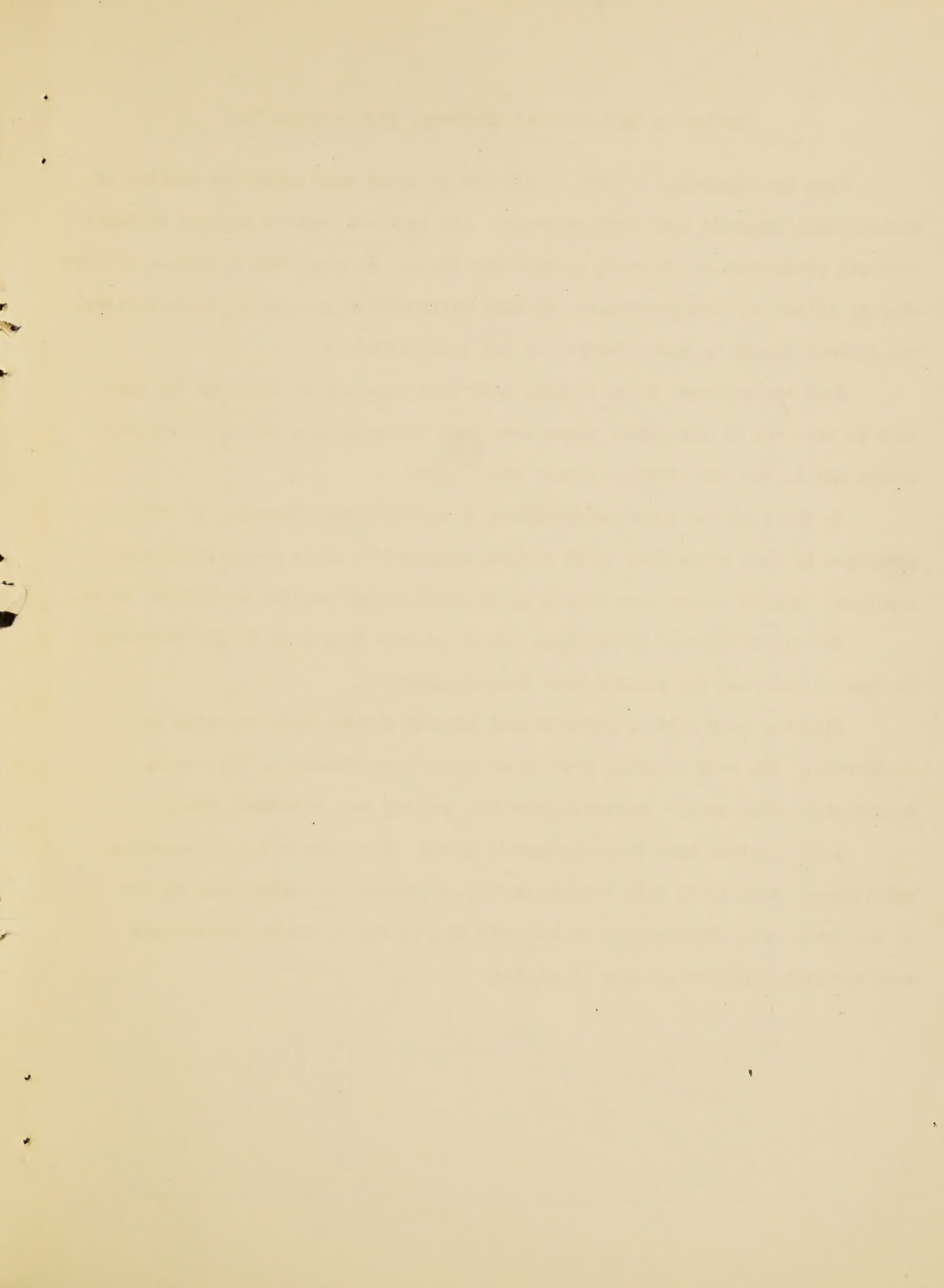


# WORKERS PER 100 FARMS IN GLOUCESTER COUNTY, N. J., 1935 BY QUARTER MONTH PERIODS

TRUCK FARMING PREDOMINATES







## Strikes of Agricultural Laborers, 1930 - April 1940

From the beginning of 1930 to the end of April 1940 about 250 strikes of agricultural laborers have been reported. All involved workers engaged in agricultural production on the soil or with livestock. Packing shed and other workers closely allied to farm production may have participated in some of these strikes, but strikes solely by such workers are not included here.

Most agricultural labor strikes have been economic as shown by the fact that in five out of six cases, wages have been involved as a matter of controversy; and in two out of three cases, wages only.

In the last few years unionization of agricultural labor has so far developed in some areas that in 37 strikes demands for union recognition were involved. Working hours were causes in 17 strikes, and working conditions in 14.

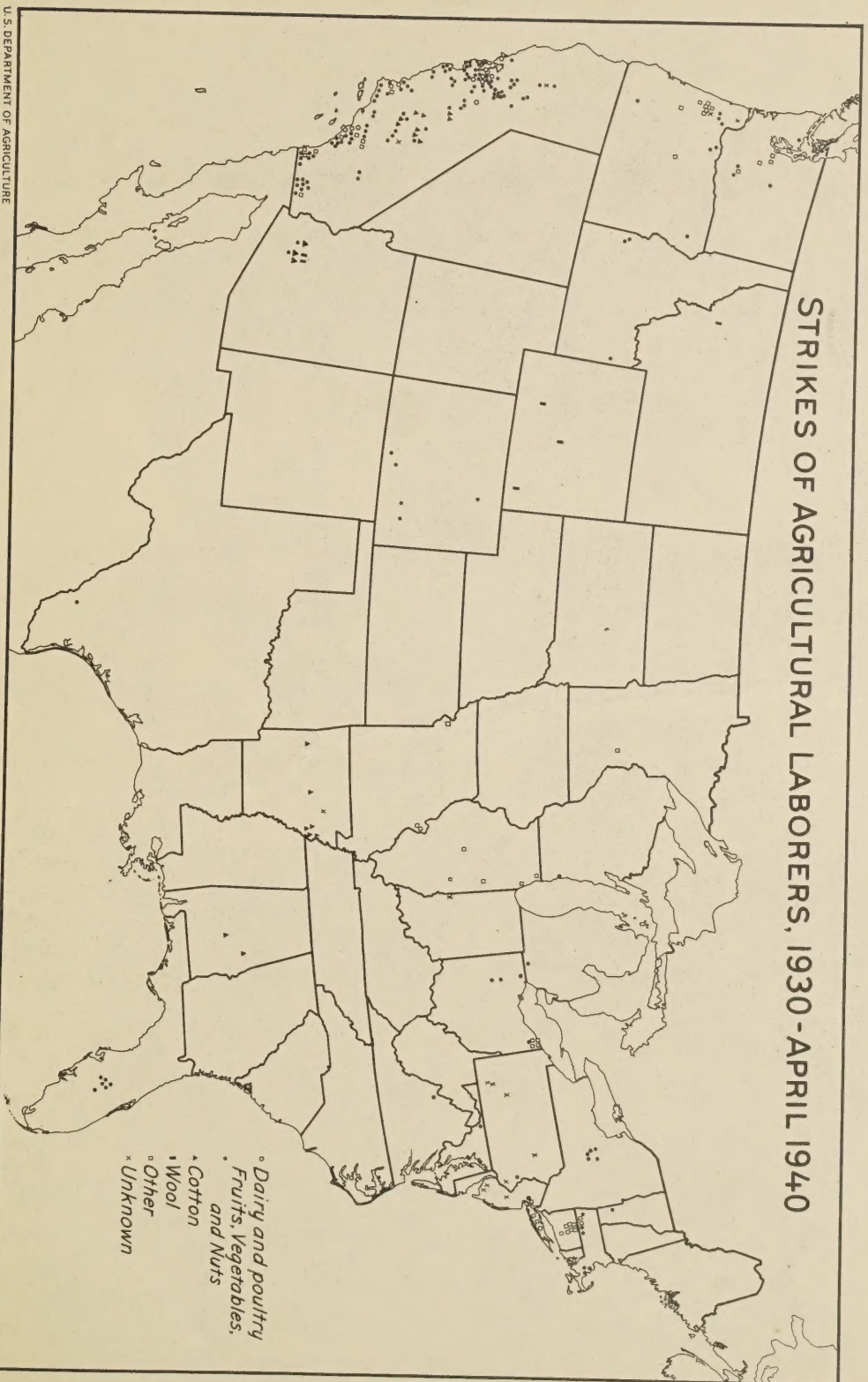
Two out of five of the strikes appear to have been lost by the laborers. In some of the rest the results have been compromises.

Slightly over half of agricultural laborer strikes have occurred in California. But such troubles have by no means been limited to that area. Twenty-nine other States scattered over the country have witnessed them.

A few strikes have been widespread enough to involve not only counties, but States. Notable in this respect have been strikes of cotton pickers and of sheepshearers. The numbers of laborers involved in a single controversy have run from a few to as many as 12,000.

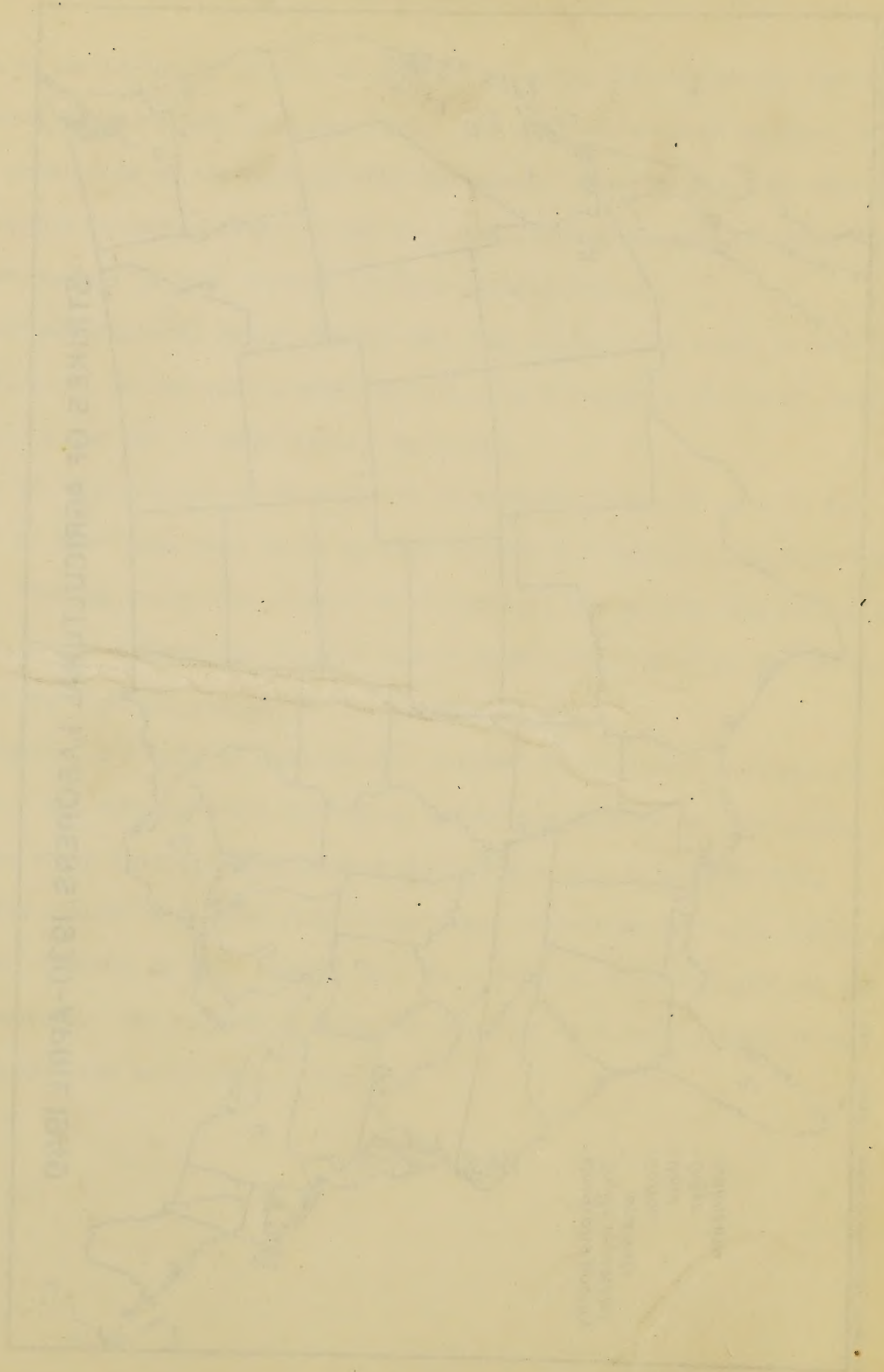


# STRIKES OF AGRICULTURAL LABORERS, 1930 - APRIL 1940



° Dairy and poultry  
 • Fruits, vegetables,  
 and Nuts  
 ▲ Cotton  
 ■ Wool  
 □ Other  
 × Unknown

STATES OF AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS 1830-1840



Legend  
Shaded states  
Unshaded states